

**System and Resource Library Administrators Association of Wisconsin
(SRLAAW)
Q4 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Date: Tuesday, October 28, 2025
Time: 12:30 PM – 3:00 PM
Location: Salons F&G, Madison Marriott West (WLA Conference Site)
Recorder: Marla Sepnafski, Wisconsin Valley Library Service

1. Welcome & Preliminary Business

a. Call to Order

Chair Steve Hesper called the meeting to order at **12:31 PM**.

b. Quorum Determination

Members Present:

Steve Hesper, Chair (MCFLS), Leah Giordano, Vice Chair (Marathon County PL), Kristen Anderson, Treasurer (WRLS), Karin Adams (Manitowoc PL), Nick Demske (Racine PL), Katherine Elchert (NWLS), Tana Elias (Madison PL), Darryl Eschete (Oshkosh), Bruce Gay (Waukesha PL), Riti Grover (Monarch), Sue Heskin (Superior PL), Brittany Larson (Bridges), Jessie Lee-Jones (Platteville PL), Angela Noel (SWLS), Steve Ohs (PPLS), Colleen Rortvedt (Appleton PL), Becky Scherer (MCLS), Marla Sepnafski (WVLS), Clairellyn Sommersmith (Winnefox), John Thompson (IFLS), Sarah Townsend (Kenosha), Tracy Vreeke, (NFLS), Dawn Wacek (La Crosse)

Excused:

Garrett Erickson (Sheboygan PL), Joan Johnson (Milwaukee) Nancy Kerr (LEPMPL), Shannon Schultz (SCLS)

Affiliated Members/Guests:

Ben Miller (DPI), Teresa Schmidt (DPI), Elizabeth Tomev (DPI), Jennifer Chamberlain (WiLS), Sara Gold WiLS/WPLC, Kara Sullivan (WLA), Ellen Kupfer (COLAND) Sarah Cournoyer (Beaver Dam PL)

c. Proxy Announcements:

Colleen Rortvedt (Appleton PL) served as a proxy for Bradley Shipps (OWLS), Gene Anderson (SCLS) proxy for Shannon Shultz, Alaina Morales proxy for Sarah Sugden (BCL)

d. Introductions/Welcome Guests

Steve Heser welcomed attendees and guests.

e. Approval of the Agenda

John Thompson motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Riti Grover seconded. **Motion carried.**

f. Approval of the Minutes of August 8, 2025 Meeting

Steve Ohs motioned to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2025 meeting as presented. Angela Noel seconded. **Motion carried.**

g. Treasurer's Report

Kristen Anderson reviewed highlights from the Treasurer's Report included in the meeting packet. The SRLAAW account received **\$225 in interest income** and incurred expenses of **\$505.31** (NFLS for advocacy travel) and **\$2,177.03** (MCFLS postcard printing), leaving a balance of **\$4,852.18** as of October 21, 2025.

Bruce Gay motions to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Tracy Vreeke seconded. **Motion carried.**

h. LD&L Report

Bruce Gay provided highlights from the September 26, 2025 Library Development and Legislation (LD&L) Committee meeting held at the Middleton Public Library:

- There has been little legislative activity following passage of the 2025-2027 biennial budget.
- Rep. Udell (D-Fitchburg, AD-47) requested feedback from WLA on draft legislation related to library material challenges. While intended to reduce frivolous challenges, the bill was not expected to gain traction.
- The Libraries Transform Poster project continues, with Pam at the WLA office assuming responsibility for this project.
- Library Legislative Day is scheduled for **February 10, 2026** at the Park Hotel.

A suggestion was made to alert LD&L to enlist the system marketing cohort in promoting Library Legislative Day. This led to a robust discussion about messaging and coordination when communicating with legislators. Key points included:

- Legislators may receive multiple packets; concerns were raised about volume and redundancy.
- Messaging should remain concise, consistent, and coordinated where possible.
- WLA's legislator packets require significant effort and customizing them further may be cumbersome.
- A potential model could include a statewide one-page message paired with system- or region-specific data.
- Individual stories remain important and valued by legislators.
- Systems must explain use of state aid, but legislators also want local impact stories.

Bruce Gay stated he would share highlights of this discussion with LD&L during its upcoming planning meeting for Library Legislative Day and will follow up with Steve Heser.

Kara Sullivan mentioned that she and Steve Conway conducted introductory visits with several legislators' offices, including Representative Udell's, to discuss WLA's role in serving Wisconsin's libraries.

2. Discussion Topic

Baker & Taylor Makes Plans to Cease Operations

- Background: American Libraries article (Marshall Breeding)**
- Open roundtable discussion on B&T alternatives, changes to ordering workflows and impact on staff and patrons**

Steve Heser referenced the *American Libraries* article by Marshall Breeding (linked in the agenda) and invited discussion on how Baker & Taylor's closure is affecting libraries. Highlights of the conversation follow.

How are Libraries Handling the Change?

- Many libraries anticipated the closure but are still struggling.
- Communication from Amazon has been inconsistent.
- Outstanding orders and end-of-year budget cycle timing are major concerns.
- Technical services staff are experiencing increased stress and backlogs.
- Smaller vendors lack cataloging piece that libraries relied on from B&T.
- Some vendors, especially those specializing in children's materials, have proactively reached out to libraries.
- Larger vendors, such as Ingram, may not have the capacity to accept an influx of new customers.
- Smaller libraries with part-time cataloging staff are experiencing backlogs.

- There is a materials expenditure per capita minimum in the Waukesha County Plan for Library Service. While libraries can miss the minimum once in the life of the plan, there is some concern for libraries that have already missed the minimum.

How are Systems Helping?

- Systems are hosting all-director conversations as a way for libraries to share their issues with others and to offer solutions.
- One system is exploring ways to assist with library materials processing.
- Systems are sharing links to vendor information and other resources.
- It was suggested there could be a role for systems if libraries experience challenges with getting bestsellers from vendors.
- One system purchases WiLS discounts on behalf of their member libraries.

What have Libraries Heard from Patrons?

- Most libraries have not yet heard complaints; it may be too early.
- Libraries that transitioned away from B&T earlier reported fewer and less significant delays with order fulfillments.

The discussion also raised related questions about staff resiliency training. It was noted that training is typically geared to public-facing interactions and with de-escalating patron conversations, and less on training for those who work behind the scenes.

Jennifer Chamberlain noted that WiLS had thought about doing a webinar or training along these lines but was uncertain how to pull it all together. She was open to suggestions and follow-up conversations with those who may be interested.

3. New Business

a. Appointment of nominations committee

Steve Hesper asked for volunteers to serve on the nominations committee. Riti Grover, Colleen Rortvedt, and Tracy Vreeke volunteered to serve.

The committee will present a slate of officers at the February 9, 2026 meeting. Officer terms are for one year, with a maximum of three consecutive terms.

A discussion ensued about possibly extending officer terms to two or three years. Steve Hesper said that he would put this topic on the February agenda for further discussion.

As part of this discussion, Clairellyn Sommersmith commented positively on the updated agenda format and reorder of topics.

b. Discussion on SRLAAW meeting length

Members discussed extending meeting lengths – particularly in February and August – to allow deeper discussion and possibly including lunch. There was consensus that meetings should focus on practical information, best practices, and peer learning.

This led to a broader discussion about SRLAAW’s purpose and intent of meetings.

Colleen Rortvedt described SRLAAW meetings as a trusted space for candid discussion of sensitive political issues, noting that resource libraries are often the canaries in the coal mine and serve as early indicators of statewide challenges.

Tracy Vreeke commented that there is potential for SRLAAW to be something different and evolve to better meet members’ needs.

Many commented that they saw value in SRLAAW meetings, and that getting together and hearing from one another, getting the pulse on what is happening across the library community, served a unique purpose.

John Thompson raised the need to review and update SRLAAW’s bylaws, which have not been revised since 1995. He further stated that while some of the objectives in the bylaws may still hold true, the bylaws could be updated to give SRLAAW more meaning, purpose and push the envelope a bit.

Ben Miller shared that he thought SRLAAW to be an incredibly productive group for the Wisconsin library community, citing SRLAAW’s success with the PLSR and advocacy efforts. He suggested coordination with other library groups to clarify roles and avoid duplication, and offered to help facilitate cross-group conversations.

The group agreed that this matter should come back for further discussion in February, and that preparatory work be done prior.

Steve Hesel will consult with Leah Giordano to determine next steps and send a follow-up email seeking volunteers.

(Note: it was during this discussion that Leah Giordano reminded the group of her plan to host a SRLAAW party the evening before the August SRLAAW meeting.)

c. Ideas for future discussion topics

Clairellyn Sommersmith shared future topics including:

- Long-term system and library projects and process management
- Rebranding processes (e.g. Oshkosh Public Library)
- Change management
- Innovative and emerging practices at resource libraries

4. Old Business

a. Review of SRLAAW distribution list

Steve Ohs discussed the need to clarify criteria for maintaining the SRLAAW distribution list. As the person responsible for managing the list, he was not aware of any hard and fast guidelines for who needs to be on the list, and when people should be removed.

Following a lengthy discussion, the group recommended limiting membership on the list to one representative per organization.

Steve Ohs will work with Steve Hesper to clean up the list.

b. IMLS Postcard campaign

Steve Hesper thanked libraries and systems for their efforts to make the campaign such a success. Approximately 11,800 postcards were sent to Congress. He suggested that libraries and systems retain unused postcards for future advocacy efforts. Ben Miller also expressed appreciation for the IMLS postcard campaign, noting the significance of IMLS funding to maintain staff.

5. Partner & Affiliated Organization Reports

a. COLAND

Ben Miller shared the COLAND Report on behalf of Ellen Kupfer. COLAND has three active subcommittees: Tribal Libraries, Department of Corrections (both established in September 2025) and Broadband.

Ben is providing COLAND with updates on library building projects that receive grants through the Flexible Facilities program and is trying to better document each project's progress and outcomes. He, John Thompson, and Teresa Schmidt have done some analysis of the applications, but more work needs to be done. There is an extensive need for building project funding and for wraparound support for planning and continuing education. Assessing the benefits of these grant projects might help to create a compelling story to share with legislators.

Members were invited to attend the **November 14 COLAND meeting** at the Appleton Public Library. The January and March 2026 meetings will be virtual.

b. DPI

Ben Millar reported optimism regarding IMLS appropriations included in House and Senate bills. He noted that the federal government shutdown does not affect Bureau of Libraries staff at this time.

Members were encouraged to complete the **Satisfaction with Heritage Quest from BadgerLink survey** by the **November 7** deadline, and to share it broadly with colleagues.

Two national library lobbying days were noted:

- ALA is sponsoring a National Library Legislative Day (late February 2026)
- COSLA (Chief Officers of State Library Agencies) 2026 Voices for Libraries (March 3-5, 2026)

A discussion ensued on what groups should be represented at these events (i.e., SRLAAW, COLAND, LD&L) and how people within these groups might be selected to participate.

Teresa Schmidt shared an update on the Wisconsin Public Library Standards project and that she and Jeni Schomber were presenting a session on the Standards process at the WLA conference.

Elizabeth Tomev reported on the Bureau's library visits in September to celebrate National Library Card Sign-Up Month. The written DPI Report in the SRLAAW meeting packet included a link to information and photos from the visits. She also provided an update on the WI Dept. of Public Instruction's migration from Google to Microsoft 365 as part of ongoing efforts to enhance cybersecurity and encouraged colleagues to contact members of the Bureau for Libraries team if they experienced difficulties with opening files, documents or web links.

c. Recollection Wisconsin

Ben Miller pointed to the Recollection Wisconsin Update included in the SRLAAW meeting packet. He highlighted that the recent joint meeting of the Recollection Wisconsin Governing Board and Steering Committee went well. He also mentioned that as a participating hub of the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), Recollection Wisconsin representatives Ann Hanlon (Governing Board Chair) and Kristen Whitson (WiLS) were currently participating in a DPLA Summit in Philadelphia. The summit planned to discuss the difficulties DPLA was having with its transition to a new institutional home, and how to engage in shaping the process. Ben assured members that whatever the outcome of the summit, Recollection Wisconsin would be in a good place.

d. WiLS

Jennifer Chamberlain highlighted the City Library Collective's collaborative data project, and encouraged members to review the **2025 Ideas to Action Fund** proposals. WiLS received a record 64 submissions.

e. WLA

Kara Sullivan thanked members for welcoming her to the library community and supporting her in her new role and expressed her appreciation to those who supported the WLA and WAAL conferences.

She shared results of the 2025 WLA/WEMTA Intellectual Freedom Survey noting increased participation in the survey and strongly perceived support from communities, library administrations and boards.

f. WPLC

Becky Sherer reported that WPLC completed its first year of its Strategic Plan, and adopted new vision, mission, and values, and that a new website was set to launch at the end of the month. She also mentions that WPLC Technology Steering Committee and Board were in discussions to extend access to the WPLC Data Dashboard.

6. Member Engagement

a. Member Roundtable

Tracy Vreeke encouraged members to attend the **Nicolet Federated Library System's 50th Anniversary Open House** on **June 12, 2026**.

Bruce Gay mentioned that the Waukesha Public Library was the recipient of a grant from the Carnegie Foundation. They expect to receive the grant in January 2026.

7. Closing

a. Next Meeting: Monday, February 9, 2026 at SCLS Offices

b. Adjournment

Clairellyn Sommersmith motioned to adjourn the meeting. John Thompson seconded. **Motion carried.**

Meeting ended at **3:35 PM**.